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YOUNG CHINESE LEARNERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD CODE-SWITCHING IN ENGLISH

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Abstract

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Abstract: It is quite challenging for young students to learn English as a second language. To alleviate this, supporting teaching methods can be used within English learning classes. Teachers play a significant role in students' learning process. They have the responsibility to provide students appropriate learning experiences and support. In other words, teachers are the 'scaffolding' who help students expand their learning boundaries and by creating a supportive educational environment, they motivate students and facilitate learning process. In bilingual classes, code-switching is considered a helpful teaching and learning method. Code-switching and scaffolding guide enable learners to work within their zone of proximal development, the support which allows students to effectively participate in the learning task. This paper investigates how code-switching can be an asset to English language learning among young learners in Beijing, China. It explores learners' attitudes toward code-switching where it is allowed and encouraged due to free code-switching use in classroom. A qualitative approach has been adopted and two methods used for gathering the data; questionnaire surveys and observations within English teaching online sessions. A total of twenty-one young Chinese students and ten educators participated in the study. It was found that younger participants expressed more positive attitudes regarding code-switching as the language barriers decreased when students could code-switch freely within a lesson. In addition, the findings illustrate how code-switching contributes to a better understanding of actual language usage in classroom.

Keywords: Code-switching, attitude, English language, Chinese language, young learners, first language, bilingual teaching strategy

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1. Introduction

Over the past four decades, English language education in China has developed tremendously. China's standard national curriculum includes English as a compulsory subject. English became a mandatory subject for elementary schools in 2001 as part of the Guideline for Promoting English Teaching in Elementary Schools from grade 3 (Ministry of Education, 2001).

While public elementary schools cannot introduce English until the third grade (Chen, et al., 2020: 5), children in private institutions and international schools have started learning English at younger ages. Students in China are often exposed to English as early as kindergarten or even earlier, as their parents hope that this will provide them with an advantage in a competitive educational and work environment (Chen, et al., 2020: 12). In recent years as the popularity of English language has increased, the number of international schools in China has grown rapidly. Parents are willing to invest a great deal in their offspring's language education and also to supervise them along the way (Li, 2020). Younger generations of parents in China seem to be aware of the tough global competition that their kids will face in the future, putting a great deal of emphasis on learning English from a very young age, sometimes as early as 3 or 4 years old (Chinese Parents Crazy Over English, 2019). According to psychologists and psycholinguists such as Vygotsky and Náádudvary (as cited in Brumen 2011: 717), language teaching should start in kindergarten and should be done in a way that is similar to natural acquisition, such as immersion programs, in which L2 is introduced through everyday tasks and other curricula activities. There are numerous benefits of learning foreign languages at an early age. Children who experience enough natural communication in the second/foreign language achieve a more native-like proficiency in grammar and pronunciation (Dulay et al., 1982 as cited in Brumen 2011: 718).

The primary language of communication and instruction at these international schools is English. The head teachers are foreign English teachers and Chinese teaching assistants are always present in the classrooms and provide assistance to students and English teachers. Teaching assistants are the main facilitators of inclusion in the class-

room (Chan & Yuen, 2015: 92). It is common to see teaching assistants performing more tasks and roles in schools, including pedagogical roles, and according to Whitehorn (2010: 68), most of a teaching assistant's time is spent working with students, followed by supporting the teacher. The role of Chinese teaching assistants in English-only classrooms is vital. Their main role is to ensure understanding of the lessons by students, translating and explaining complex grammar points. Additionally, they assist students in communicating with their foreign English teachers.

English teachers organize the classes around different topics and educational activities that students find interesting and engaging. Their aim is to equip students with the necessary language skills to develop their ability to communicate and think in English. Chinese teaching assistants also focus on the importance of mother tongue (Chinese) instruction as a means of helping students maintain skills on their first language as well as English language proficiency development.

As mentioned above, English is the main medium of instruction at international schools in Beijing, China. A teacher's responsibility is to teach students how to communicate and express themselves only in English, but despite the emphasis on English-only policies and pre-arranged curricula in these international schools, teachers use the Chinese language in their classrooms. It seems that teachers use different supportive methods, in order to improve the learning outcomes and meet young students' needs for communicating and understanding English lessons. These methods refer to strategies that ease the process of language learning.

Among the different teaching methods, code-switching is used in bilingual settings. Due to the coexistence of two or more languages, speakers frequently switch from one language to another one to suit the communication needs. According to Losey (2009: 217), "Research into classroom interaction focusing on code-switching has the advantage of providing an understanding of the discourse of a shared identity and community among the interlocutors".

Code-switching has been used as a method to scaffold students' learning. Instructional scaffolding, also known as "Vygotsky scaffolding" is a teaching method that helps

students learn more by working with a teacher to achieve their learning goals (Sarikas, 2020). According to Vygotsky's (1978) concept of ZPD, 'Zone of Proximal Development' the potential development of a learner refers to areas beyond a learner's current capabilities and understandings. It is what a learner has the potential to achieve, but has not yet accomplished. Vygotsky scaffolding is part of the education concept ZPD. Proponents of ZPD and instructional scaffolding believe they are highly effective ways to maximize a student's learning. Scaffolding and the related concept of the zone of proximal development are teaching methods that can help students learn much more information and much faster than they might with traditional instruction (Sarikas, 2020). It is most often used with younger students since they are learning new skills and acquiring concepts they have not been exposed to before (Sarikas, 2020). It is imperative that the teacher understands a student's ZPD in order to scaffold the learning process appropriately.

Others who support the use of first language (L1) use in second language (L2) teaching point to some positive aspects of L1 use (Celik 2003:362). Cole (1998) argues for selective, principled use of the L1 due to its practicality and efficiency, stating that:

The struggle to avoid L1 at all costs can lead to bizarre behavior: One can end up being a contortionist trying to explain the meaning of a language item, where a simple translation would save time and anguish ... if students understand the concept of a noun, it is much simpler to translate the word "noun" than to describe it in L2. (Cole, 1998: 2)

Although it is generally agreed upon by educators, parents, and learners that immersion in a target-language environment is the best method of learning a foreign language, code-switching is often discussed as a useful strategy in immersion settings. Huerta-Macias and Quintero (1992: 86) found that, "Code-switching serves to not only enhance communication in the teaching/learning process, but can also help to maintain and develop the languages of a bilingual."

Previous studies have not considered the impact of students' young age on evaluating code-switching use in classrooms. For younger students to understand difficult concepts such as grammar, it is sometimes necessary to explain the lessons in their first language. To explore this situation, the present study focuses on how code-switching as a supportive teaching strategy can facilitate English learning process for young Chinese

learners. It aims to evaluate students' perceptions of the code-switching method used to assist them in learning English.

2. Literature review

Code-switching has been defined in literature in various ways. Perhaps in the simplest terms, it can be defined as the use of more than one language during the course of speech (Gardner-Chloros 2009: 7). Apart from this, some complicated definitions also have been put forward by some researchers. For instance, Gumperz (1982: 52) refers to code-switching as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems”. On the other hand, Cook (2000: 83) defines it as the process of “going from one language to the other in mid-speech when both speakers know the same languages”. More specifically, in the context of second or foreign language teaching it is the alternate use of native language and the target language by teachers or learners. However, choosing what language to use in the EFL classroom is not as straightforward choice as it may seem, and a number of factors can encourage teachers to use L1 in the classroom. Some of them can include explanations of syntax and morphology and the management of students' behavior (Macaro & Lee, 2012: 718). In most cases, the primary function of using L1 is to provide information about lexical meanings (Macaro, & Lee, 2012: 718). According to Macaro (2013), there are three theoretical positions regarding the use of a first language in target language (TL) learning: (1) the virtual position, (2) the maximal position and (3) the optimal position. The *virtual position* suggests that the L1 will never be used in target language teaching. In a sense, the *maximal position* resembles the virtual position. The difference is that depending on the classroom condition, first languages may be used by students or teachers. Contrary to these two positions, the *optimal position* suggests that the students' first language can be used to assist students in mastering the target language. In support of the optimal position, classroom code-switching is referred to as limited use of the students' L1. In target language teaching, the L1 should be used carefully, ethically, and in principle (Song & Lee, 2019: 145).

Investigating the role of code-switching in the EFL classroom has been a topic of research for some decades (e.g., Cook 2000; Gumperz 1982; Jacobson 1983; Myers-Scotton 1993; Poplack 1980). Some researchers argue that code-switching is helpful for students, since it can scaffold the students' learning, help teachers manage the classroom and promote interpersonal relationships as well as explaining difficult words and concepts (Sari & Sari, 2019: 48).

In discussing the beneficial role of code-switching in EFL classrooms, Jacobson (1983) mentions some benefits of using L1 in second or foreign language classrooms. He argues that it can boost the student's lexical and grammatical understanding; it helps students with different language proficiencies to concentrate on learning the concepts being taught; and it can keep students on task, therefore improving the academic learning process (as cited in Nordin et al., 2013: 480). In the same vein, Ahmad and Jusoff (2009: 49) emphasize that code-switching can boost students' understanding by providing them with opportunities to communicate. Accordingly, Cook (2000: 83) states that using native and target language at the same time in the classroom is a humanistic approach towards the students, as they can speak their mind easily without the fear of making mistakes or not knowing the right vocabulary. In addition to this, Cook (2000: 83) also suggests that teachers' code-switching can be beneficial for the students on several occasions, namely, understanding grammar, managing tasks, and completing tests. Following the same line of thinking, researchers Greggio and Gill (2007: 376), have found that teachers code-switch in four different situations when teaching beginners: when exchanging grammar explanations, instructing students, monitoring or assisting them during their activities and engaging them with interesting activities. Teachers explained that they code-switch in order to "clarify words, expressions, structures, and rules of utterances" (Greggio and Gil, 2007: 376).

In contrast to the positive views on code-switching in the context of EFL classrooms, some researchers argue that code-switching in the language classroom is not beneficial (Nordin et al., 2013: 481). Opponents of code-switching often dispute that teachers are expected to use L2 fluently during teaching, since they are the main source of

input for students (Sari & Sari, 2019: 48). Mostly, the advocates of the Audio-Lingual Method of teaching L2 and Direct Method, claim that learners do not need to understand every single word in the EFL classroom, and code-switching has a negative impact on the learning process (Nordin et al., 2013: 481). Additionally, they suggest that overusing L1 may negatively influence L2 quality and quantity. Accordingly, teachers are not able to optimize the classroom learning time and students are not sufficiently exposed to the L2 input, and as a result, they will learn less than they would if the teachers spoke full-time in the target language (Jingxia, 2010: 11). Code-switching is also thought to increase the internalization of an incorrect L2 form, causing errors to be irreversible (Wong-Fillamore, 1985, as cited in Nordin et al., 2013: 481).

Although there are several useful findings on code-switching in EFL classrooms from different perspectives, more work needs to be done on learners' perceptions towards code-switching. In the next section, the background of research on the learners' perspective is discussed.

2.1. Learners' views on code-switching

Research so far has shown that learners do not want their native language to be left out of the classroom (Macaro & Lee, 2012: 720). In the context of bilingual education, Cook (2001, as cited in Yao, 2011: 19) states that code-switching is natural in a bilingual setting. Moreover, she notes that learners prefer to have the ability to move from one language to another. Similarly, Macaro (1997: 123) has examined adolescent learners' attitude towards code-switching and found that by providing only L2 instruction, students often struggled to comply with their teachers' instructions. Accordingly, a study by Brooks-Lewis (2009: 224) demonstrates that teachers who spoke the children's native language helped students understand the situation and prevented classroom shock. In another study conducted in Australia, students were less clear about the L1's benefits, some thought it helped them memorize and comprehend more vocabulary, while a significant minority believed L2 definitions were also important (Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008: 267). An ambivalent attitude has also discovered by Storch and

Wigglesworth (2003: 766). These researchers have found significant variations in students' reactions to using the L1. This may be related to students' beliefs about learning. The belief that L1 should help them complete assignments and have more meaningful discussions.

As previously mentioned, one of the main functions of code-switching by teachers is to explain new vocabulary and improve lexical understanding. In this regard, Kroll and Stewart (1994: 150-151), suggest a revised hierarchical model (RHM). This model posits that learners in the early stages of language acquisition are more likely to link L2 words to their L1, as their understanding of a concept is already closely linked to its L1's lexical representation. In other words, it is preferred to arrive at a concept using an L2 word through its equivalent word in the L1. The model also suggests that, as proficiency in the L2 language increases, a stronger link develops between concepts and L2 words, resulting in less reliance on the L1 route. Beginner learners may therefore prefer to receive information in L1 more than intermediate and advanced learners.

Other researchers also mention that the effectiveness of teachers' code-switching is different between high and low proficiency learners. Their studies show that the language proficiency of the students has an important role to determine the efficacy of code-switching (Fareed et al., 2016: 3). They conclude that for learners with a lower level of language proficiency, code-switching can be considered an effective strategy because it can be used as a method of scaffolding to assist learners. However, more advanced learners need to be exposed to more challenging target language input.

2.2. The Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky (1978: 86) defined the ZPD as “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peer”.

The idea is that individuals learn best when working with others during a joint collaboration, and such collaborative attempts with more skilled people help learners

learn and internalize new concepts, psychological tools and skills. From the perspective of Vygotskian education, Roosevelt (as cited in Shabani et al., 2010: 238) recommends that by giving learners engaging and culturally meaningful tasks and a broad range of varying difficulty levels of assignments, learners will need to work together or with an adult to accomplish them. Following completion of the task jointly, the learner will likely be able to successfully complete the task independently in the future, and as a result, that learner's ZPD will have increased. This process is then repeated at the higher level of task difficulty that the learner's new ZPD requires.

Initially, Vygotsky (as mentioned in Verenikina, 2003: 5) elaborated the concept of ZPD for psychological testing in schools. Vygotsky objected the traditional psychometric-based testing in Russian schools and argued that testing must examine not only the current level of a child's achievements but also (and mainly) the child's potential development in future. The actual level of development does not necessarily describe development. Instead, it shows what is already achieved, it is a 'yesterday of development'. The assisted performance shows what a person can develop or achieve in the future, what is developing (potential level, 'tomorrow of development', what a person 'can be') (Vygotsky, 1978: 86).

As Tudge (1992:156) mentions the concept of the ZPD can be fully understood only in the context and as part of Vygotskian theory on the whole. "In fact, failure to see the connections between the zone and the theory as a whole means that it is difficult to differentiate Vygotsky's concept from any instructional technique that systematically leads children, with the help of an adult, through a number of steps in the process of learning some set of skills" (Tudge, 1992: 156). In the same line of thinking, Yaroshevsky (1989: 283) considered "teaching of a student not just as a source of information to be assimilated but as a lever with which the student's thought, with its structural characteristics, is shifted from level to level".

Cole & Cole (2001, as cited in Shabani et al., 2010: 239) explain that the term *proximal* shows that the assistance provided complements and builds on skills that the learner already has. Yaroshevsky (1989: 283) argues that Vygotsky's idea of ZPD repre-

sents the link between education and development. Verenikina (2003: 4) argues that Vygotsky had to overcome two types of reductionism, namely biological and sociological, to be able to gain access to society's cultural assets such as language which are thrust on them by adults. Vygotsky placed his ZPD in this area of sociological development by arguing that rather than to let education stay behind, it must run ahead - helping the learner rise to the next level through help from the adult (Yaroshevsky, 1989: 277). From Vygotsky's point of view, the difference between doing something independently and with the help of others indicates stages of development which do not necessarily coincide. He explained that an instructor's teaching was not only a means of getting information into a student, but it was a mechanism by which the student's thought, with its structural characteristics, could be raised to the next level (Yaroshevsky, 1989: 283).

According to Vygotsky (1962, cited in Verenikina, 2003: 5), the acquisition of culture is one of the most important parts of a child's psychological development. From the very beginning of a child's life, social interactions are crucial for their development. As stated by Vygotsky, any function of the mind has to go through an external social stage in its development prior to becoming something internal and truly mental. As such, the function starts out socially and turns into an internal function through internalization. The foundation of mediation is intersubjectivity, which Wertsch (1985, as cited in Verenikina, 2003: 6) describes as the process of establishing shared understandings between the child and adult.

In working within the zone of proximal development, we take into account how a child's performance has been socially mediated, that is, how shared understanding or intersubjectivity has been acquired. By achieving and meeting the child's understanding level, the educator can then guide the child upward, using culturally mediated learning processes. In this way, the tool of mediation can be considered as it relates to the techniques that are used to transform assisted performance into independent performance (Verenikina, 2003: 6). This tool is defined as scaffolding and will be discussed in detail in the next section.

2.3. Scaffolding

Rasmussen (2001: 570) describes scaffolding as “a form of support for the development and learning of children and young people”. This term can be used as a metaphor to talk about the way “teachers or peers supply students with the tools they need in order to learn” (Jacobs, 2001: 125).

More related to the concept of ZPD scaffolding is defined by Wells (1999: 127) as "a mechanism for operationalizing Vygotsky's (1987) concept of zone of proximal development". He identified three distinctive features of educational scaffolding: 1) the collaborative nature of discourse in which knowledge is co-constructed; 2) the role of activities in which knowledge is embedded and 3) the role that artifacts play in mediating knowledge (Wells, 1999: 127).

Accordingly, Mercer and Fisher (as cited in Wells, 1999: 221) believe that the main goal of scaffolding in teaching is to transfer the responsibility of the task to the students. They suggest that a teaching method should qualify as scaffolding if three conditions are met: the teaching method should a) enable students to carry out tasks that would be difficult for them to do on their own; b) be capable of bringing the students to a level of competence which will enable them to carry out the tasks on their own; c) be followed by some evidence that proves the students have reached a higher level of independence.

In the context of the ESL classroom, scaffolding can happen in different ways. Verhoeven (1997: 395) suggests that there are some principles for English teachers when they attempt to scaffold students. They first need to motivate students to work on the task in the target language; second, they should define the number of steps that are required for the student in order to do the task; third, finding the problems that the students can encounter while doing the task; and lastly, demonstrating a constructive approach to overcome the problem of task completion by helping the students interpret their own feelings and classroom experiences.

Martin-Jones and Heller (1996: 9) mention that the term *scaffolding* can also be applied to bilingual ESL classrooms when teachers use L1 to scaffold the building of

knowledge: a means through which connections can be made between “the knowledge acquired by students through the medium of their first language(s) and the knowledge of the school mediated through ... the language of instruction” (Martin-Jones & Heller, 1996: 9).

However, there are some researchers that criticize scaffolding for making the student over-dependent on teachers. For instance, Gibbons (2002: 18), believes that scaffolding in the language classroom needs the teacher’s utmost attention to detail and their constant observation. Students constantly challenge teachers to scaffold supportively in the situation when errors and misunderstanding arise; and the most important problem is that the use of scaffolding needs a completely different orientation to learning tasks and qualitative results by some teachers.

In the same line of thinking Tsui (1996: 154) also reports that scaffolding makes students become over-dependent on their teachers and develops teacher-centered classes.

Other researchers compare scaffolding with the ZPD and find some limitations in the metaphor of scaffolding. For example, Lave and Wenger (1991: 48) argue that compared to the ZPD, which emphasizes the teacher-student communication, scaffolding is a one-way communication process.

A more specific study of scaffolding is presented by Donovan and Smolkin (2002). They take a look at the scaffolding in children's writing. They investigate the role of different levels of scaffolding in children's understanding of their knowledge of genre. Tasks range from minimal or low-level support to middle or high levels of support. It was observed that the highest level of support in their range of scaffolding is described as a "direct instruction with revision" (Donovan & Smolkin, 2002: 435). Their study shows that while scaffolding can help children it may also hinder them in demonstrating their full range of genre knowledge (Donovan & Smolkin, 2002: 428). This finding confirms that scaffolding might become counterproductive when understood as direct instruction.

It should be noted that the limitations mentioned by these researchers on scaffolding do not take into account the age limit of students. In addition, the focus and use of

scaffolding among young Chinese students is to motivate and encourage them to learn English and to participate in English-language learning activities.

3. Aim

The study aims to assess young Chinese learners' attitudes toward code-switching use in their English language classes in Beijing, China. Due to factors such as age and structural differences between students' L1 and English language, the need of code-switching in English language classes and its positive effects on English language acquisition among young learners are investigated. The target students are young Chinese learners who have lower proficiency and limited knowledge of the English language. In order to validate the data found in the study, some English instructors who were teaching in international schools in Beijing were also involved. They were surveyed about how young learners perceive code-switching and the effectiveness of this method in their classroom.

The following research questions are explored by this study:

1. What is the attitude of young Chinese learners towards the use of code-switching?
2. What is the correlation between the need of code-switching and the student's age?
3. How does the structural differences between students' L1 from English affect the need to code-switch in classrooms?

The study may not cover every aspect of bilingual code-switching in English language learning classrooms, but it will provide valuable insight into the necessity of code-switching for young Chinese students.

4. Material and method

In this section, the materials, methods, and procedures used to conduct this research are discussed in depth. The study involved twenty-one Chinese students in two international schools in Beijing (figure 1) and ten native English teachers. Young learners between the ages of five and ten were chosen since the focus was on early stages of second language acquisition among young learners.

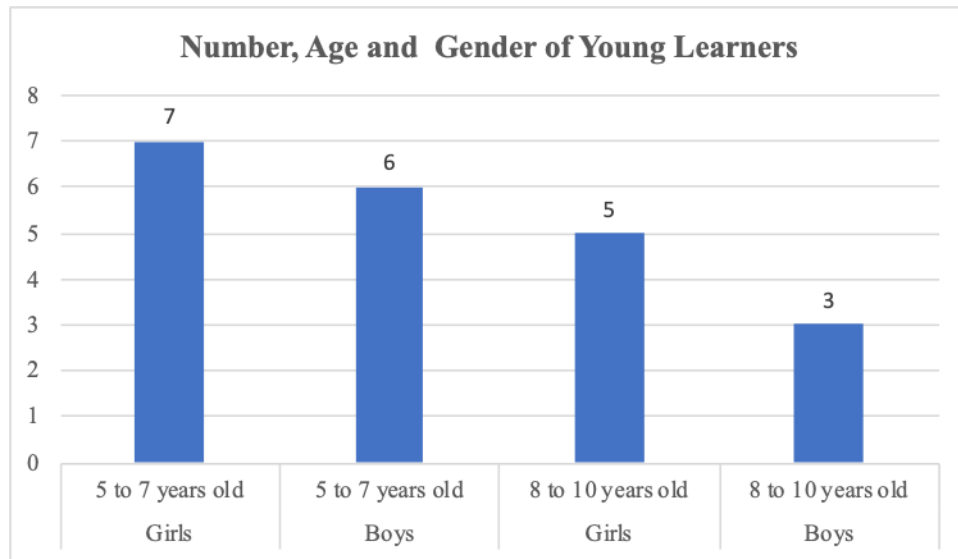


Figure 1: chart of number, age and gender of young learners

To collect data, there are a variety of qualitative and quantitative approaches and it is often advantageous to use a mixed method approach (Angouri, 2010:30). The current study is a descriptive qualitative study which incorporates multiple data collection methods to gain better understanding of individual participants, including their opinions, perspectives, and attitudes. It was conducted using methods such as questionnaires and observations. The significant relationship between the respondents' frequency of the use of code-switching and their age is reported quantitatively by figures.

Since the purpose of the study is to explore attitudes of learners, questionnaires were used to gather the participants' impressions on code-switching. Questionnaires permit anonymity and ensure honest responses, as well as enabling elimination of bias caused by differing phrasings of questions based on the individual respondents. Additionally, Observation sessions were conducted in order to strengthen the data collected from the questionnaires and gather more reliable data. Direct observation was done by the researcher to evaluate the need of CS in different situations. Interview method was not chosen as the participants were quite young and might not be able to understand a question or explain themselves clearly, instead, the survey design was used in an attempt to assess the attitudes of a larger group of students.

Teachers and parents of young participants were informed about the objectives of the study and the purpose for which the data collected would be used. All the information

in the study is anonymous and all ethical requirements, including information, consent, and utilization were met.

4.1. Questionnaires

The first method used for collecting data was through questionnaires. Two online questionnaires were created for students and teachers. Multiple choice and open-ended questions were used so that both students and teachers could freely express their thoughts and ideas. Both students and teachers' questionnaires were designed by a web-paged survey program called WeChat, a Chinese social network which is used by many Chinese people on a daily basis. The questions have been drafted to help answer the research questions that were established in the aim section.

4.1.1. Students' questionnaire

The students' questionnaire (Appendix 1), was presented in both English and Chinese. The questionnaire comprises seventeen questions. The students were asked how code-switching is used in their classroom and for what purposes their teachers implemented the CS method in their English classes. They were instructed to answer questions based on their basic understanding towards the code-switching method used in their classroom. In addition, the participants were requested to explain when code-switching was necessary and in what circumstances it would be beneficial.

There were seventeen multiple choice questions as well as an option to provide explanations for five of them. Clear and understandable questions were designed to enable students to answer them independently. The questionnaire was distributed through the researcher's previous colleagues in two international schools in Beijing, China. They were sent via WeChat groups to the parents of the students. When it came to questionnaire for younger students (between the age of five and eight), parents filled in the sections that required writing, however, they were asked only to relay their children's responses, not their own opinions. A total of thirty-two questionnaires were received, however twelve of which were not used due to age limit and school type. By reviewing their

answers, the researcher was able to discern whether the students were impacted in any way with the code-switching method and evaluate their attitudes towards CS. Apart from age and grade, no other personal information was provided.

4.1.2. Teachers' questionnaire

The other questionnaire (Appendix 2) was intended for English teachers. Twenty-one questions were included in it. A total of eighteen questions were multiple choice, and eight of them had the option of adding an explanation. The other three were linear scale questions. The purpose of the questionnaire was to analyze the general aspects and roles of code-switching in English language classrooms. It explored whether or not code-switching in class would enhance the students' understanding of the English language. Participants were found through a WeChat group of foreign teachers. English teachers with experience teaching preschool or primary school students and working in Beijing international schools were selected. The questionnaire then was distributed through WeChat program. They were informed about the purpose of the study and were asked to answer the questions based on their experience with code-switching method in their classrooms. Teachers' consent was obtained on sharing the information regarding their students and classroom activities and methods. In addition to being asked about their experiences in teaching English via code-switching, they were also inquired about code-switching's impact on learning outcomes, classroom participation and teacher-student communication.

It should be noted that English teachers who work at international schools in Beijing are responsible for preparing lesson plans for students. They often follow educational curriculums which are provided by the schools' academic team but the teaching methods and strategies are the matters that they implement in their classroom based on their students' needs. At a workplace where the immersion is the policy, the reason that a school still allows English teachers to use non-immersion policies is related to teachers' experiences in teaching English. More experienced teachers are more likely to be trusted by principals and parents.

4.2. Observation

The present study is a descriptive qualitative study, as it monitors and observes the respondents. Observation sessions were used as the second method of gathering data. The observation consisted of five online English teaching sessions, conducted with two groups of students varying in age. Each session lasted forty-five minutes. The sessions were arranged in order to observe and investigate the students' attitudes toward CS in an actual learning situation. The lessons' content was similar to that of schools. The announcement for online English sessions was published in WeChat. It explained that free English sessions would be offered and English learning activities were designed for students for the purpose of the current study. Parents of the participants were informed of the purpose of the English online lessons and the permit for recording sessions both as videos and audios was obtained. As names were used during the session, they are part of the recordings. However, these English names are nicknames and not the children's official names. As a result of the different geographical locations of the researcher and the students, sessions could not be held in person. Instead, they were conducted online. The Zoom program was used for the English sessions and the participants' audio and video were clear throughout. The sessions were also recorded by Zoom's recording application. The data was then transcribed into text and analyzed.

4.2.1. Participants

Participants were limited to students in the age range of five to ten years old. A particular focus was placed on the age of the students since younger learners require more supportive methods for learning a new language. Thirty-three students volunteered to participate in the study but only twenty-one of them were chosen based on their age and school type, which was meant to be an international school. The students were all native Chinese speakers who were living and studying in Beijing, China. They all were studying in international schools where English language was the communication and instruction medium of the classroom. The sample was divided into two groups. Group A consisted of thirteen students, aged five to seven. They were then divided into three smaller groups

consisting of four to five students each. A total of eight students aged between eight and ten comprised Group B. These eight students were split into two groups of four each. Each small group received one session of about forty-five minutes.

4.2.2. Data collection stages

Two different stages were implemented for collecting data. The first stage was to record the lessons in order to observe teaching and learning processes and the second one was taking notes in the online English teaching sessions. All of the teaching and observations were carried out by the researcher, and notes were carefully taken during each task and each session was recorded for further analysis. The researcher considered ways in which observational methods such as taking notes and recording sessions could be combined to observe the participants' behavior and interactions and answer research questions. This qualitative observation provided a more depth insight into the students' attitude toward code-switching.

4.2.3. Content of online English sessions

To allow observation of different aspects of code-switching, the lessons consisted of three tasks. To assess the role and need for code-switching, the first part of the procedure was an oral English activity. The students were asked to speak freely over a given topic, which was to talk about their likes and dislikes. They were required to code-switch, however, they were only allowed to code-switch when necessary. The purpose of the free use of code-switching was to observe under what conditions students had to code-switch; lack of vocabulary or grammar knowledge, communication purposes, or adjusting themselves to the situation. Notes were carefully taken on how the students used code-switching to complete tasks.

In the other part of the session, two different sets of English vocabulary and grammar lessons were taught. Both groups of students were taught new vocabulary and grammar, once with the help of CS method and once without CS. The purpose of embedding two different teaching models was to observe how the level of difficulty of a lesson

and different structure of L2 from students' L1 affects code-switching use within a lesson. For the vocabulary teaching, the teacher tried to create a contextual experience that would leave a deep impression. Two interesting stories were used, and the text of the story was previously sent to parents to print and get them ready for the session. A list of ten to twelve new words was selected for teaching. Short videos of stories were provided. Students had the opportunity to read the stories out loud, and the meaning of the new words was explained with the help of CS. As well as learning outcomes, the students' perception of code-switching usage within difficult concepts was evaluated.

The third part included a guessing game. Students had to guess the right word with the help of the items' descriptions and picture cards. The game was easier for the younger group, as they only had to guess a single word using two pictures as clues. It was all about guessing the right word from the images that had some connection and required some basic vocabulary knowledge. In contrast, the older students needed to listen to the description of the word. They needed higher listening skills and preexisting vocabulary knowledge to understand the sentences and guess the right word. The activity was just in English in order to observe how students would perform a particular task without code-switching. In addition, their emotional responses towards the English-only rule were evaluated.

4.3. Data analysis

To process the data collected from questionnaires and observation of online sessions, qualitative content analysis was used. The data was analyzed following different steps, such as identifying the impact of code-switching on students' attitudes as well as evaluating the role of code-switching in better learning English. The examples of lessons, quizzes and related tasks were analyzed for the effect on students' language acquisition and their subject matter knowledge. Notes were also taken through the careful observation on students' participation, motivation regarding each task. Following this step, the data was analyzed to determine the result of the study.

5. Results

The data obtained from the study is presented in the following sections. The content is divided in two parts: questionnaires of students and teachers and observations of online English teaching sessions.

5.1. Findings from the questionnaires

The questionnaires reflected the different functions of code-switching in English learning classes and gave light about the attitudes of students toward code-switching.

5.1.1. Students' views on code-switching

According to the students' questionnaire, various reasons have been listed for code-switching use in their classrooms, and these reasons included social, discourse, or pedagogical functions.

The students were asked whether their foreign teachers could speak Chinese and they mentioned that despite some foreign teachers not being able to speak fluent Chinese, they prepared and used Chinese words and phrases related to each lesson while teaching. They mentioned that teaching assistants were also available to translate and explain the lessons in Chinese. Young learners were satisfied with receiving explanations and instructions in Chinese. They were pleased about being able to complete the tasks and participate in the activities. Students noted code-switching provided benefits to English learning.

Among the younger group of students, they mostly answered that they used code-switching to express personal emotions. There is a strong relation between the students' emotional state and the language they are using. Students utilize their L1 when they are emotionally affected, so that they can express their gut feeling (Orynbeke et al. 2020: 6288). As parents of young students place heavy emphasis on English learning for their kids from a very young age, kids feel stressed when they cannot finish tasks and do not make progress in their learning process. Due to this, students found that code-switching

helped them integrate more effectively into class discussions and satisfy their parents and teachers.

In comparison, older students also agreed that by code-switching they had a better communication with their foreign teachers. Additionally, they noted that they code-switched in areas where they needed improvement. In this way, they could identify and correct their English language errors. Apparently, younger students were more likely to code-switch while older students used it more wisely as an effective tool to develop their language skills. Moreover, older students confirmed that by code-switching they could accomplish their tasks which made both teachers and parents more satisfied. According to the students, their parents expected them to speak and communicate in English as much as possible. By code-switching, they were able to fulfill their parents' expectations.

In the students' questionnaire, 4 out of 8 students mentioned the help they received from their Chinese teaching assistant. They believed that Chinese teaching assistants also provide more detailed information which enabled them to fully understand the lessons.

5.1.2. Functions of teachers' code-switching

As the students were young, they were positively receptive to the teachers' support and assistance, thus teachers' opinions on code-switching's significance and role were necessary to know the merits of this method from a professional and educational point of view.

Regarding the teachers' questionnaire, seven out of ten teachers stated that they code-switched mostly to comfort students to help lower their anxiety levels. According to them, code-switching frequency appears to be impacted by the age of students. As learning English is a big challenge for young learners, students often feel nervous when participating in a discussion or performing an activity. Additionally, teachers noted that students were satisfied when they were allowed to ask questions and express themselves with the help of code-switching.

According to 8 teachers, code-switching should be permitted when necessary. As reported by them, most of the students used CS when they could not find an accurate alternative for a word or phrases. To effectively engage students in discussions on different

subjects and activities, all English teachers believed they needed to be proficient in the Chinese language. A few key vocabulary words and grammar points were prepared in Chinese before each lesson by three teachers who were unfamiliar with the Chinese language. They agreed that code-switching increased learning outcomes and students' satisfaction.

Since the policy for using L1 in teaching L2 differs among international schools in China, three English teachers among others mentioned that they had to rely on the Chinese teaching assistants to translate words or phrases and explain instructions to the students in their classroom. Even though the policy prohibits the use of Chinese language in classrooms, schools have found alternative ways to improve students' comprehension of English lessons. Chinese teaching assistants constantly try to help teachers and students to facilitate learning process. Despite this No Chinese policy, those three English teachers noted that they used code-switching when they needed to comfort their students and reduce their stress through challenging tasks.

In addition to the English language, all teachers were teaching other subjects such as science or arts in an immersion program. In order to achieve maximum fluency of English, they code-switched for explaining key grammar structures and vocabulary to improve students' language skills. They believed that code-switching would allow students better interact and extend conversations.

Most teachers, nine out of ten, agreed that the students' attention was more easily retained when they used code-switching. It helped them to encourage and empower their students to move forward. Moreover, They noted that code-switching was also a key tool to establish positive relationships among teachers and students. Due to the students' young age, the teachers attempted to build a strong bond with them. They believed a strong personal connection would encourage students to participate more and perform better in the classroom. According to them, a close connection helps students develop a love for learning.

Teacher responses on code-switching in the classroom tended to emphasize its advantages over disadvantages. The following are some of their direct responses:

- T1: "The main advantage for me is being able to have all of the students fully understand what the class is doing, whether it be an activity, rules to a game we will play, or just having a smooth transition from one activity to another, without children confused or lost as to what is going on."
- T2: "Allows the teacher more time to actually teach rather than explain, demonstrate multiple times. Disadvantage: Students tend to rely on Chinese more."
- T3: "The learners can form a bond quickly with their teacher and the teacher can explain to them clearly what's expected of them but the learners can refrain from speaking English if they get used to speaking Chinese with their teacher. It's important for a teacher to always remind them to try and speak English."
- T4: "I see just advantages. I make better connection with my kids and they try to make me satisfied by listening and participating better."
- T5: "Build trust and a better bond with students"
- T6: "It Helps with rules or comfort. Code-switching can be useful for socializing and organizing the class too."
- T7: "When teaching a new lesson that they may not understand it at first"
- T8: "To make sure that students have a better understanding of class activities instructions or complex concepts, code-switching to Chinese may be necessary. It is used for better conveying of messages"

In addition, two teachers listed the following disadvantages of code-switching:

- T9: "Some students don't respond well to English if they know you can speak Chinese."
- T10: "Young learners rely too much on the teacher's code-switching, losing the ability to think independently."

As shown in figure 2, the purposes of code-switching among teachers of young learners are listed.

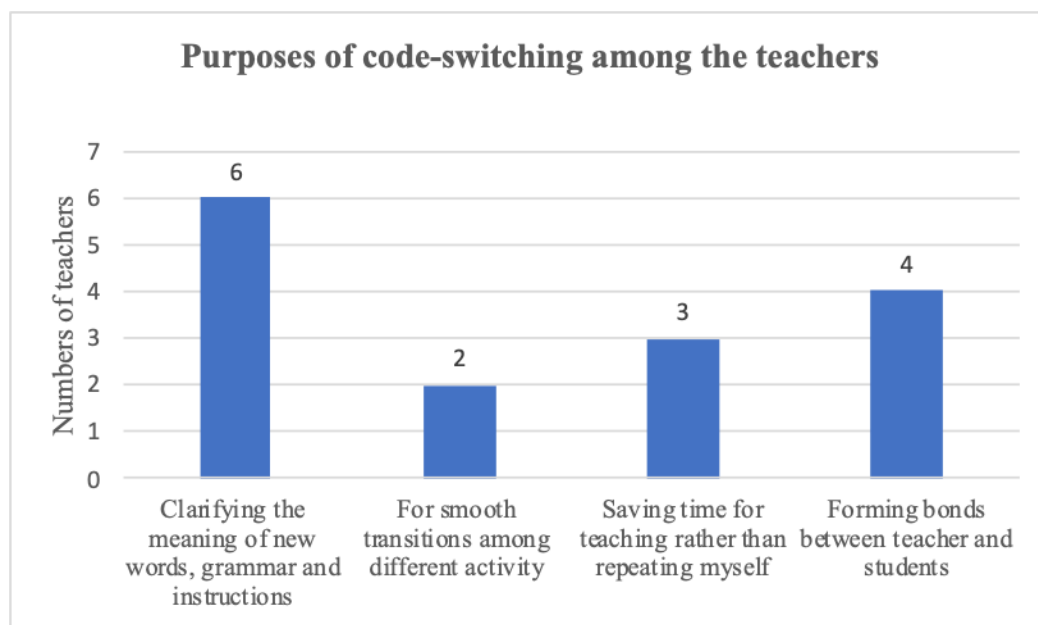


Figure 2: Purposes of code-switching among the teachers

Commentary from teachers regarding the use of code-switching confirmed the benefits of this method for both students and teachers. They code-switched for different purposes and believed that it was an effective tool to enhance learning when used properly. They mostly believed L1 can be used as a scaffolding for students' learning of L2. By switching from L2 to L1 when needed, teachers can scaffold the students learning and reduce the students' cognitive burden in trying to understand the language input given by the teachers, especially when explaining grammar and new vocabulary (Sari & Sari 2019: 49).

5.2. Observations of online sessions

The other stage of data collection involved the observation of online learning English sessions. The main objective of the observation was to discover how the students feel about code-switching and how they react to the strategy of not-using code-switching.

5.2.1. English oral practice

During the first phase of the online sessions, the students were asked to talk about their likes and dislikes. It was observed that the more items they listed, the more acceptance

they received from their parents and teacher. Even with the help of code-switching, parents were pleased to see their children completing the task and conveying the meaning.

The younger students eagerly spoke up when their teacher encouraged them in Chinese language and asked them to keep talking with the help of code-switching. They were told to switch in Chinese to fill the gaps in their speech. Since they had one of their parents present during the online sessions, they felt stressed when they were unable to finish sentences or spoke less than others. According to Opra (20012: 2), a sociolinguistic perspective of code-switching indicates how it affects many aspects of emotional and social life. Having a better understanding of what code-switching is and how it assists in managing stressful situations, it can be used to decrease anxiety, facilitate conversation and facilitate emotional recovery in crisis situations (Opra, 2012: 2).

Under the stressful situation, code-switching was used to encourage students to take part in discussions and feel more satisfied about their performance. Thanks to this strategy, learning became less stressful when students received clear and understandable instructions. Lack of confidence in the students' ability to communicate in English can lead to students' silence in class. This phenomenon can also be a major concern for teachers who want their students to take part in class discussions and activities. The students' inability to participate in classroom discussions and activities also posed a challenge when they were comparing themselves to others. In these international schools' cases, parents have high expectations of their kids. It seems the prevailing attitude toward English instruction in some international schools isn't meant to benefit students, but rather their parents (Ying, 2021). Students will therefore have to deal with stressful situations while learning a lesson or completing an assignment. Hence, code-switching can be beneficial for students to deal with their frustrations associated with the difficulty of an English lesson. Therefore, it is a teaching strategy taken into account to encourage young learners to be more active and, in turn, increase student satisfaction with English classes.

Having limited English language knowledge made it difficult for learners to explain their answers accurately. They were often able to elaborate on the subject in Chi-

nese later on. Data in figure 3 shows the frequency of use and reasons for code-switching by students.

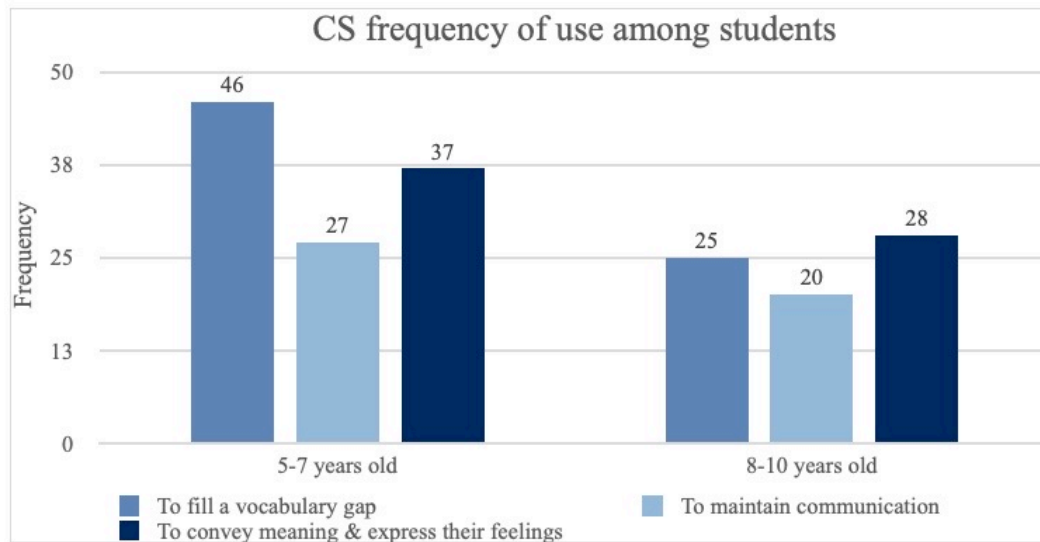


Figure 3: CS frequency of use among students

As a result, code-switching facilitated the learning process, encouraged active participation, and fostered a love of English language learning among younger students. Most of the young learners used code-switching due to lack of vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, they used it as a communicative tool to convey their ideas in different situations. The students perceived code-switching positively since they could have received support from their teacher in order to complete the task.

Below are some examples of how code-switching could be used to accomplish the task:

Free speech on likes and dislikes:

Example 1:

Lucy (five years old): I like to watchKǎtōng piàn?

Teacher: Is it a TV program?

Lucy: what's program?

Teacher: 电视节, Diànshì jiémù

Lucy: Oh, I got it! Yes it's a program.

Teacher: Do you mean cartoons?!

Lucy: That's right, I like Tom and Jerry cartoon.

Teacher: So, the word you learned was CARTOON, right?!

Lucy: Yes, Thank you teacher

Example 2:

Tina (eight years old): I like to play piano. I practice piano every day. I also like to learnpái xiāo.

In this case teacher wanted her to explain about the instrument. She pretended that she had no idea about the instrument so she asked for more details.

Teacher: pái xiāo ! What's that?

Tina: I do not know how to say?

Teacher: Try to explain it. I will help you.

Tina: It's for old china. It's chuátōng Chinese yuèqi.

Teacher: Then we can say traditional Chinese instrument right? What new words did you learn Tina? Traditional (chuátōng) and music instrument (yuèqi) right? Can you repeat them?

Tina: yes, traditional and instrument. My grandmother can play it too.

According to these examples, it can be seen that, with the help of code-switching, they were able to easily convey their thoughts and communicate better. They felt more confident as they could participate in activity and received their parent's acceptance. Young students may have had difficulties participating in the conversation due to their limited vocabulary knowledge, and thus it became evident that code-switching was needed.

In contrast, code-switching was not allowed for the other group. Due to insufficient vocabulary knowledge, some students could not complete their speech. They were

constantly asking their parents to help them to finish their sentences or some remained silent or said, “I do not know how to say it”. As a teacher's major concern is students' participation in various educational activities, the English-only rule prevented students from continuing their speech and completing the task.

5.2.2. Learning vocabulary and grammar

The second part of the session involved learning new vocabulary and grammar structures. The teacher sent worksheets and a series of images in advance, so students had them already printed for the lesson. Considering each group's age, lessons were prepared with two different levels of difficulty. They were mostly about grammar skills in writing, parts of speech and word identification. It is primarily aimed at improving students' communication skills, the way they need to speak and write properly. Lessons were often designed through spoken and written activities. They were taught once just in English and the other time with the help of code-switching. It can be seen that with explanations in English, as opposed to well-reflected knowledge, the results were simply reflections of how they understood the language. As the grammatical structure of students' L1 differed substantially from their L2, additional explanations were needed during grammar lessons. Code-switching as an effective method used to clarify information for students when they were involved in a learning activity with difficult concepts. By code-switching and giving more detailed explanations, it can be concluded that the students gained a greater level of understanding.

Here are some examples based on observation sessions:

Example 3:

The lesson was about the use of adjectives and their types. John was eight years old. He had the general knowledge of different parts of speech and can easily find an adjective in a sentence. But as the lesson was about different kinds of adjectives such as adjectives of numbers or quantity, he could not answer the question nor find the adjective in

the sentence when the teacher merely explained it in English. Later as the teacher used code-switching he could recognize the new kinds of adjectives in the sentences.

- He did not take *much* time to solve the problem.
- December is the *last* month of the year.

Example 4:

Lucy was ten and she studied English both at school and with private English language teachers. She was asked to find the right parts of speech in the sentence, she knew that the sentence needed a noun but she chose the wrong answer as she had only learned the *ness* suffix for nouns. With the help of code-switching, the teacher explained about abstract nouns that can be formed from verbs by addition of *acne*.

- The boy asked his mother for more

A). guiding B). guidance C). guide D.) guideness

Example 5:

Maria was five. A preschooler who started learning English at age 3. She had a basic understanding of the parts of speech and could easily make simple sentences and give short answers. In the lesson related to adjectives and adverbs, she answered the question wrong and asked the teacher for explanation in Chinese. When she realized an adverb describes a verb, she learned the grammar point and answered similar questions correctly.

- My friends all tell me that I sing (bad / badly)

In the vocabulary teaching via story-telling, the practice on reading and listening helped kids to internalize new words. Code-switching helped them to retell the whole story and used Chinese for some of the new words. Different functions of code-switching were observed during storytelling activities.

Example 6:

Andy was five years old. During the online sessions he was shy to start a conversation. After the video of the story was played, the teachers asked him to retell the story.

As he was allowed to code-switch when he needed, he used Chinese words for some new English words and linked the sequences of the different parts of the story. The following sentences are examples of how to phrase them:

Story text: ‘I’m too ill to sleep,’ said Sam. ‘Have a drink,’ said his dad. ‘Ouch, it hurts! I’m too ill to drink.’ Sam had a sore throat. ‘Oh dear,’ said his dad. ‘Here is some medicine.’

Andy: Sam was too ill to sleep. His dad said he needs to drink something. *Dān shí* (but) Sam said ouch, it hurts. Sam had a *Yānhóu tòng* (sore throat). He needs *yào* (medicine). *Hòulái* (later on), doctor came to visit Sam.....

As shown by these examples and based on the field notes of this part of the online lesson, code-switching was more commonly used when teaching grammar and new English words. It was utilized in order to facilitate communication, to bridge conversation gaps, and to improve learning activities. During the task instruction and grammar explanations, the teacher switched from Chinese to English more frequently to ensure that the students learned the grammatical rules and elements. Results of observation showed that code-switching reduced learning difficulties and enabled the teacher to explain grammar concepts more effectively. The students also felt more satisfied once they understood the grammar lesson and were able to answer correctly. In other words, code-switching could be used to scaffold the learning process, allowing teachers to talk more about concepts and help students feel more confident about completing their tasks.

5.2.3. Vocabulary guessing game

The third and last part of the session consisted of a guessing game. Depending on their age, different types of games were played by each group of students. The younger group had picture cards to guess the words but older students had to listen to description of a word to find out the answer. Since the rule of the game was to speak only in English, different reactions were shown by the students. The older group paid more attention to the English-only rule. They did no attempt to code-switch but asked their teacher to repeat more and speak slower in order to understand the sentences better. On the other hand, the

younger ones expected their teacher to explain more in Chinese. They were more insistent on using code-switching and put an importance on winning. It was this desire to be successful in the competition that drove the majority of the younger students to code-switch while playing the game. Some students pointed out if their teachers had provided assistance in Chinese, students could have guessed the words easily and won the game.

The answers were separately collected from each student and the winners of each group were praised by the teacher and their parents. Here are two examples of the groups' guessing games:

Example 7:

In order to guess the word, younger students had to look at the picture cards and make connections between the images and the word. Sometimes they said that they could guess the word if the teacher would code-switch and explain it in Chinese.

Emily who was five, could guess the word *rain*, *umbrella*, *baby*, *sleeping*, *green*, from the pictures provided to her but she did not know the word *bow* in the baby's picture. She tried to put *rain* and *umbrella* with *baby*, *sleep* and *green* together but could not guess the right word which was *rainbow*. After the teacher told her in Chinese that the answer is *Cǎihóng*, Tina stated that she knew the word *rainbow* but didn't know the *bow* word and that was the reason she couldn't find the connection between two pictures and guess the right word.



Umbrella <https://www.youngsinsurance.ca/site/blog/2018/07/20/umbrellas-are-not-just-for-rainy-days>

Baby with bow https://themodmango.com/item_4567/Choose-Color--Messy-Bow-Baby-TurbaHat.htm

Example 8:

The game was played differently in the other group. Daniel, who was ten years old had to listen to the description of a word and try to guess the right answer. Based on his age, the task was different. A good knowledge of vocabulary and listening skills were required to play the game. The teacher read the description of a job title to him but at first he misunderstood and could not guess the right word. Later, with the help of teacher, he learned the new word.

In this case, the intended word was *security guard*. The description of the word was read to Daniel; ‘ A person whose job is to guard a place (such as a store or museum) and make sure the people and things in it are not harmed’. He first guessed *policeman* but as teacher explained the word *security* and the differences between a policeman and a security guard job descriptions, he got the point and learned the new word.

Based on the observation, it was obvious that younger students naturally expected their teacher to help them by switching to Chinese and explaining the instructions more clearly as their English proficiency level and vocabulary knowledge were lower.

6. Discussion

This study has attempted to link the age of the young English language learners and their attitudes towards code-switching. It investigated how code-switching could improve language learning process and create more interest and confidence among young students. Young learners' low proficiency in English could lead to stress and frustration since comprehension would not be possible. Thus, code-switching is used as an emotional support for young learners who had difficulties to adjust to new educational environments as well.

The point of the present study was to indicate the certain reasons of code-switching use among younger students. Code-switching as a form of scaffolding supported students to achieve pre-determined educational goals. It also enabled students to succeed in an activity that they otherwise would have been unable to do it by themselves. Young learners' educators should modify their strategies depending on the students' developmental progress so they can meet their needs and interests to the greatest degree possible. Ac-

according to Billings and Walqui, “Our responsibility as educators is to provide students appropriate learning experiences and support to help them realize their potential development” (Billings & Walqui, 2018: 1).

According to Vygotsky (1978), zone of proximal development (ZPD) is considered the most common term used in education. The learners’ potential development which refers to skills and knowledge beyond their current abilities (Billings & Walqui, 2018: 1). Vygotsky’s work shows that by analyzing the skills, knowledge, and practices that are on the edge of development (i.e., the ZPD), students can attain the desired level of skill with targeted support or scaffolding provided by teachers and thus move toward autonomy in that area (Billings & Walqui, 2018: 4). Thus, code-switching as a form of scaffolding helped young Chinese learners to accept English through different programs such as vocabulary, grammar and other supplementary lessons. The help and support they get will influence their attitudes to language learning.

It would be extremely challenging to teach young learners complex English lessons such as grammar or vocabulary. Therefore instructors of the young learners needed to adjust their support to the needs of young students. According to my personal experience as an English teacher at international schools in Beijing, China, learning English is affected by the learner's first language. It can be a matter of a variety of things, such as vocabulary, pronunciation and word orders among a number of other things. Teachers who understand these issues can help their students overcome these obstacles. In general, as the structure of L1 differs from L2, teachers need to implement supportive methods when teaching. In order to maximizing success, code-switching was used to fulfill young students’ expectations from the English classes and to aid in learning process. Hence, it provided an optimal encouraging learning environment.

The research question, therefore, explored learners’ attitudes towards code-switching. The findings indicate that code-switching is overwhelmingly preferred by younger students while older ones who had better proficiency in English were more favorable to the English-only rule during the online sessions. Regarding to the new different educational environment and the difficulty of the language learning process, code-switching

was used to manage stressful situations as well. Students who were not confident in conversations and had no interest in participating in class activities could receive support by their English teacher and with the help of their L1. Regarding the results of the observations and questionnaires, the findings mirrored that young learners are not in favor of English-only instruction in general. According to Chavez (2003: 194), a key factor in learning a target language is the learners' attitudes towards learning environments. Young learners' views must be taken into account when deciding whether code-switching is needed.

Limited studies have addressed the problem of young learner's proficiency and attitude as a result of language difficulty and age. The result of the present study shows that proficiency in L2 (as here is English) influenced learners' choices of language. And due to the young age of learners, code-switching has been viewed positively by teachers and students alike, demonstrating the effectiveness of code-switching to enhance language learning.

The study's empirical evidence indicates that due to the young age of the learners, code-switching by teachers and students was essential. Code-switching is seen as an additional support from their teacher. The support that boosts students' confidence, access to better outcomes and meets the school's educational expectations from students.

As the study was conducted among Chinese students, the importance of improving and excelling in English language proficiency was more highly emphasized by parents and international schools. Thus, code-switching was used to implement such a determined strategy for better learning outcomes. To be more specific, the overall findings of the present study are similar to Macaro and Lee's study on code-switching and English-only instruction and how does age make a difference to learners' attitudes. English-only might paradoxically make an English classroom less communicative by virtue of making some learners less willing to communicate in the L2. (Macaro & Lee, 2012: 737)

The results may differ depending on the first language of English learners and their proficiency in English. Comparing the two different aged groups in the study, English-only instruction was more appealing to older students as they had better English lan-

guage skills. They still showed a positive attitude toward the use of code-switching throughout the lessons to better understand the difficult concepts encountered, such as grammar.

Referring the previous study by Chen et al., (2020) found that the experience of early childhood English learning positively contributed to later English language and Chinese language achievement and also the attitudes toward English learning. The positive attitude toward learning English is correlated with the experience of learning English in early years. In their study, neither the quality of the English instruction nor the type of instruction were examined.

In the present study, positive attitudes toward code-switching have developed due to the kind and quality of instruction the young learners received. The study aimed to demonstrate that how with developing learning methods such as CS and with the concern of students' cognitive abilities, code-switching improves English language acquisition. Since code-switching increased the students' engagement, it was perceived positively by the students. It should be noted that the benefits and advantages of code-switching found in this study depended on both the age group and the nationality of the participants.

6.1. Limitations and directions for further studies

The present study was limited to online observation sessions. More comprehensive results would be obtained if observations were conducted in person so the teacher could explore more aspects of code-switching in classrooms.

Another limitation was the age limit and the nationality of the participants. Results may be different if the study was conducted with older students of different nationalities. More experiences on second language learning and structural similarities between L1 and L2 may have effects on students' preferences for L1 use in English learning classrooms. Students with a different mother tongue may have different attitudes toward code-switching, especially if their proficiency in English is higher and students' first language is closer to English, like Norwegian or Danish. Further studies are needed to indicate the role of CS as a means of facilitating English language learning or demonstrating English

language proficiency. Thus, older groups of participants and different nationalities are needed to really establish the pros and cons of code-switching method in English language learning classrooms.

The result of the present study were not analyzed according to teachers' experience as students were more relevant. An interesting area of research could be to explore how teachers' experience may influence code-switching use by both teachers and students.

It would be great to conduct the same study over the course of a semester or academic year with a larger group of students, a longitudinal study that can analyze the need and frequency use of code-switching as students progress in English over a longer period of time.

7. Conclusion

This study clearly indicates the positive attitudes of young Chinese learners towards code-switching. Due to the differences in English and Chinese grammar and lexicon, teachers used code-switching when teaching complex concepts. Code-switching as a form of scaffolding is used to support the students' development in English language learning. The purposes and reasons for code-switching among teachers and students were mainly for better communication and increasing the young learners' motivation to learn English. With the help of CS, teachers could make a communicative environment which the young learners can overcome their anxiety and language barriers.

According to the policy and high expectation of Chinese parents, learning language is quite challenging for young learners. In spite of the fact that the teachers should only teach students in English, the actual classroom practice in the international schools in china is different. They used CS for clarifying the instruction, teaching new words and grammar points, explaining mistakes and better understanding. Depending on the proficiency of students in English and the difficulty of English lessons, students may feel stressed about completing their tasks and teachers' code-switching emotionally support them to make trust and create bonds with their teachers. The use of code-switching by

teachers should not be considered as a defect in their performances as it's used as a method to help students progress in language learning. The findings demonstrate that each bilingual educational setting needs strategies based on its students' need. As far as code-switching is viewed positively by the young Chinese learners, it can serve as a useful method in English language learning process. It is less likely to be necessary as their language knowledge increases.

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Appendix 1:

(Students' questionnaire)

- 1 - Gender: Girl / Boy
- 2 - What grade you are?
- 3 - How long have you been studying English?
 - Since kindergarten (part of kindergarten curriculum)
 - Since third grade (with the school curriculum)
 - Private English classes
- 4 - Have you had a foreign English teacher?
 - yes
 - No
 - Some courses with foreign teachers and some with Chinese teachers
- 5 - Could / can your foreign English teacher speak Chinese?
 - Yes
 - No
- 6 - Did your foreign English teacher uses Chinese for teaching English?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes
- 7 - When did/does your English teacher use Chinese during the class?
 - For new words and phrases
 - For grammar lessons
 - When students can't understand some instructions
 - While praising and encouraging students
- 8 - Do you think it is helpful when your foreign English teacher uses Chinese for teaching?
 - Yes
 - No
 - explain your answer
- 9 - Under what circumstances do you need your teacher's assistance with code-switching?

- While learning difficult lessons
- While having exam and need more explanation
- When you have problems in the classroom

10 - Do you prefer asking help from your English teacher or Chinese teacher?

- My Chinese teacher (he/she understands me better)
- My English teacher, he/she is very helpful as well
- Both of them

11 - Do you feel stressed if your foreign teacher cannot understand you when you use Chinese?

- Yes, sometimes I need to ask or answer partially in Chinese and I am stressed if I can't express myself clearly in English
- No, If she/he can't understand Chinese, I usually don't ask questions.

12 - Does it sound more friendly when your foreign teacher use Chinese to communicate with you?

- Yes
- No

13 - Do your parents agree with you about using Chinese in your English class?

- Yes
- No, my parents insist on not using Chinese in English classroom and with English teachers

14 - Is it easy for you to understand when your foreign teacher teaches only in English?

- Yes
- No
- It depends on the lesson or activity
- Explain your answer

15 - How often do you use Chinese and English in the same sentence?

- When I don't know an English word
- When I don't understand instructions of an activity
- When I have a problem and I can't express myself in English

16 - How do you agree with code-switching use by your English teacher?

linear scale (not helpful~very helpful)

17 - Do you mix Chinese with English when talking to other students?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes, please explain

Appendix 2: **(Teachers' questionnaire)**

1 - Gender: male / female

2 - Age:

3 - Your position at your work:

English teacher / Assistant / Head teacher

4 - What age of students do you teach?

preschool level / primary school level / middle school level / Other

5 - Can you speak Chinese?

Yes, fluently / Yes, some keywords related to teaching / Yes, conversational / No, I don't

6 - Do you have Chinese teaching assistant in your class? Yes / No

7 - How often do you use Chinese language in the classroom?

Most of the time / Not so often / When it's necessary (explain)

8 - In which level you need to use more Chinese while teaching and communicating with your students?

Preschool level / Primary school level / Shortly explain the reason

9 - Does the age of students affect on your code-switching usage frequency?

Yes, younger students need more code-switching as they need more support

Yes, older students need more code-switching as they learn more difficult lessons

No, The age has no affect

Explain if there are other reasons

10 - Does code-switching depend on your Chinese Language level of proficiency?

Yes / No

11 - If you can speak Chinese fluently, will you use more Chinese while teaching?

Yes / No

12 - Does the policy in your school let you to communicate in Chinese with your students?

Yes / No

13 - For what purpose do you often code-switch? (you can select more than one option)

Teaching new vocabulary and grammar / While encouraging them to participate in a class activity / During play time / For better communication and understanding / Reducing anxiety and comforting them in stressful situation

14 - Does your school have immersion education? Yes / No

15 - Do you teach other subjects in English?

Yes / No / If yes, please name the subject.....

16 - Do you believe you need more Code-switching in an immersion bilingual education?

Yes / No / If yes, shortly explain why

17 - Do students have positive language attitudes towards code-switching in your classroom?

5=strongly agree; 4=agree; 3=not sure; 2=disagree; 1=strongly disagree

18 - Can code-switching engage students' attention better?

Yes / No (please explain)

19 - If you don't code-switch, will you need your Chinese assistant to clarify tasks' instructions?

Yes, all the time / Yes, while teaching / It depends on students' English level

20 - Do you believe you can build a better bond with your students by the help of code-switching?

5=strongly agree; 4=agree; 3=not sure; 2=disagree; 1=strongly disagree

21 - Can you mention some advantages or disadvantages of code-switching in your classroom?
(explain your personal experience)